

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING-December 19, 2013

Unofficial

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING

Hooksett Town Hall

35 Main Street

Thursday, December 19, 2013

CALL TO ORDER

M. Miville called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm

Pledge of Allegiance

ATTENDANCE

Chair M. Miville, K. Van Horn, C. Morneau, S. Peterson, C. Akstin (School Board Rep.), JR Ouellette, J. Pieroni, and T. Lizotte (Town Council Rep).

Excused: T. Jennings, F. Bizzarro and N. Haas.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

December 5, 2013

J. Pieroni motioned to approve the minutes as amended. Seconded by T. Lizotte.

Vote unanimously in favor

December 12, 2013 - Tabled

PUBLIC INPUT

No input

OLD BUSINESS

School District Budget Review

J. Pieroni motioned to accept the revised School District budget. Seconded by K. Van Horn.

T. Lizotte: There is a question on the accuracy of the revised budget based on some communication with the SAU. We were at a position where the default was \$140,000 below the proposed budget and now it is \$130,000 above the budget.

C. Akstin: There was no discussion about the \$140,000 request by the Budget Committee at the last School Board meeting because the high school issue took precedence. I did have a conversation with Dr. Littlefield the next day and he said once he got the 8th graders settle with high school he would look at the budget to reduce the budget \$140,000.

J. Pieroni asked if the budget that was submitted to the committee is the official School Board budget. The School Board can do more work if necessary but we need to approve the number the School Board voted on.

T. Lizotte: The budget that we have is what was submitted by the School District. There is some discrepancy with the food service number.

Vote unanimously in favor

M. Miville stated that there is a discrepancy in the default budget. The proposed budget bottom line has a clerical error and we would like to clarify. The other issue is the default being above the budget by \$134,000 seems inconsistent. The Committee needs to know what the final two numbers are.

J. Pieroni asked if anyone had any items that they would like to recommend reducing or trimming.

T. Lizotte: What does the Budget Committee feel could be cut. We can always cut discretionary. What percentage of the budget is discretionary vs. fixed. A conceptual model would be if 25% is discretionary, could we apply a 3% cut of discretionary which would be a \$250,000 cut. Earlier I mentioned cutting \$140,000 which was the difference in the default. The School Board said they wouldn't touch any leftover funds from the tuition line. The discretionary fund is what we can attack.

K. Van Horn: What is the strategy for reviewing this budget? There are things that are intuitive. There is no science. We don't really know what is discretionary vs. required. We are saying supplies, postage, etc. is discretionary?

M. Miville: Things like equipment, furniture and anything that is not contractual.

K. Van Horn: The increase is clearly because of high school so what we are talking about cutting in K-8. High School is contractual so it is large component of the budget increase. The only discretionary we have is K-8.

JR. Ouellette: I think we should look at the fund balance over the past 4-5 years. We know there will be fluff. We also have to look at the balance; \$716,000 was the balance for 2013. There may have been other items purchased from that fund that we are unaware of.

K. Van Horn: Do we know when we look at lines, did they overspend or did they use fund balance.

JR Ouellette: It is a bottom line so it doesn't matter.

J. Pieroni: Were there one-time items in last year's budget?

T. Lizotte: Yes, Common Core Curriculum.

M. Miville: I asked K. Lessard what the tax increase for the proposed budget would be. It is \$1.48 and the proposed tax increase for the default it would be \$1.40 based on current revenues.

J. Pieroni: One thing we need to keep in perspective is the impact on the high school. We've been paying the lowest per pupil tuition for students in the state. Our elementary and middle school expenditures compared to the state is not high. We are at a point where we will realize the true cost of the high school.

J. Pieroni motioned to request the Superintendent make a 1% (Approximately \$300,000) cut in the budget. Seconded by T. Lizotte.

Vote unanimously in favor

T. Lizotte suggested that C. Akstin request the School Board hold a special meeting.

The budget committee requested a default budget breakdown.

NEW BUSINESS

Board Stipends

M. Miville stated that he has raised the issue numerous times because there is inconsistency with the stipends and the amount paid to different boards. Recently there was a committee that requested a raise. As a result, the question was raised with the Town Council to establish a stipend for the Budget Committee in conjunction with the other stipends being considered by the Council.

J. Pieroni: I would be opposed to it. This committee does not have any duties outside this meeting like a Councilor who has other responsibilities outside their Council meeting. This is all we do. We volunteer an evening a week for a period of weeks. I think it is a voluntary committee and we should be volunteers.

M. Miville: The Supervisors of the Check list were asking for a raise. I am just asking for an equitable consideration.

T. Lizotte: I think Dr. Shankle has put together a list of stipends.

JR Ouellette: I think that a small stipend would be in order to help with fuel which could cover some of the volunteer's cost.

K. Van Horn: I think it is simply about equity and the Council should look at all the committees and treat them equally.

PUBLIC INPUT

None

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Ann Moynihan